## The Scouts of the Silvermine

By GEORGE MITCHELL

## Laziness Is the Father of Invention

EY, SLIM!" cried Freckles one morning not long after sun-up, but Slim made no response. So Freckles went to the rear of Slim's house and, pulling out a barrel, stood on it, and, peeking in through the window shutters, beheld the object of his visit, sound asleep.

Opening the shutter and pulling a long spear of weed



from the grass, Freckles dusted Slim's nose. Slim, still asleep, beat the air once, twice, and on the third strike brought the flat of his hand full upon his face, sat up with a snort of pain and tenderly patted his injured feelings.

Freckles meantime disappeared from view and waited for Slim to drop back for another nap. But Slim, having seen the open shutter, had grown suspicious and, reaching down, prepared for another invasion by grasping a large, heavy shoe. A minute passed and another. Slim was about to beg pardon of all boyhood for his want of confidence in it, when the top of Freckles's head appeared above the window sill.

Slam! Bang! The missile struck the shutter and Freckles, scared out of a year's growth, lost his balance and, carrying the barrel with him, sprawled his length on the ground. Slim ran to the window. "Are you damaged much?" he called. "That's a nice way to treat your friends," grumbled Freckles, rubbing his shins. "My friends call at the front door," said Slim, "and you are a little early for breakfast. What's up, anyway?"

"I'm up," said Freckles, "and I've come to tell you that we go to the cave at 9 this morning, so get a wiggle

on." Slim rubbed the remaining sleep from his eyes, and with Freckles's help was soon on the road. Suddenly Slim came to a halt. "What's the idea?" asked Freckles. "I just remember that mother said that the next time we went to the cave I might take George with me." Freckles looked his surprise. "George who?" he asked. "Our mule," said Slim. "Gee, you'll spoil everything," said Freckles ruefully. "You're so darned lazy you'll ride up to the camp some day in a big touring car." And he looked at Slim with contempt.

"You don't get my idea," said Slim. "I'm not going to ride him; he's going to be our pack mule. Don't you understand? It's stylish and everything." "Why didn't you say so?" replied Freckles. "Because you jump at a fellow so," said Slim. "I think it's a dandy idea," continued Freckles, "and we'll tell the fellows, so we can bring all the things we have always wanted to but couldn't because they were too heavy." Slim raised his head with pride. "I've always been able to think of bright things to do," said he.

So they rounded up the others—Bait, Squak and the Chief, and when they heard of the plan they were delighted, and when they had everything ready they piled George high with their belongings and started away with the mule loaded to capacity. "You're a great little genius, Slim," said Paul; "I don't know what we'd do without you." And Slim accepted their praise with becoming modesty—for Slim.

Each boy put about twenty-five pounds of luggage on George, but he didn't mind it in the least. "What's a hundred pounds amongst one mule?" said Squak. "I

